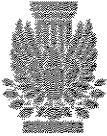


# AIA Honolulu

A Chapter of The American Institute of Architects

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

9 June 2009



TO: Honolulu City Council Regular Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> Session

ATTN: Todd K. Apo, Chair and Presiding Officer and Members of the Honolulu City Council

RE: Bill 16, CD2 Executive Operating Budget and Program (Item TF) Transit Improvement Bond Fund

## Testimony of Jeffrey Nishi, AIA, 2009 AIA Honolulu President

My name is Jeffrey Nishi and I am current President of the Honolulu Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA Honolulu). I am here to provide testimony on behalf of AIA Honolulu regarding Bill 16 CD2—specific to funding decisions that would secure the Administration's selection of the technology for the proposed Honolulu transit project.

The AIA **supports** a rail transit system for Honolulu and believes that a viable, flexible light rail system that is capable of running at grade or elevated as the conditions warrant, would be the best solution for Oahu. We continue to have grave concerns about a rail transit system, particularly through the urban core, and as such we continue to advocate for the city to select a flexible transit technology that can meet the long-term needs of our growing communities. Research by the AIA transit task force shows that if the City were to adopt the newest in light rail technologies, a Honolulu rail system could be completed faster and built and maintained for less money, saving all of our taxpayers billions of dollars.

AIA urges the City Council and administration to reconsider approval and funding today of the proposed fully automated and elevated hot 3<sup>rd</sup> rail system. We urge you to adjust your proposal to incorporate the latest state-of-the art technology for light rail systems, which includes low platform cars operating with intermittent third rail technology, alternating with overhead catenary wire and safe pedestrian access and crossing. AIA research indicates that approximately 10 miles of the proposed 20 mile transit route could be built at-grade, rather than all elevated, saving the City and County of Honolulu, and Oahu's taxpayers, an estimated \$2 billions dollars (\$2,000,000,000). Initial construction cost savings for current flexible rail systems incorporating at-grade travel are 1/3 to 1/2 cost of similar length costs for the planned grade separated, fully automated hot rail systems.

On behalf of the members of AIA and other concerned citizens of Oahu, AIA urges the City Council to withhold additional funding at this time for the proposed all elevated, fully automated system. It is the citizens of Oahu who will bear the tremendous burden of funding over 80% of this proposed \$5.6 billion dollar

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transportation solution—the largest public works project in the history of this state. Particularly in these challenging economic times, and in light of proposals by organizations such as AIA for more viable, cost-effective solutions to address Oahu's transportation problems, the citizens of Oahu deserve better accountability and additional consideration by the Council, before locking ourselves into a selection of transit technology that the City and its citizens can ill afford. Please vote NO on Bill 16, CD 2, Item TF.

For additional information on AIA's position in support of flexible transit systems for Honolulu, visit [www.aiahonolulu.org](http://www.aiahonolulu.org)

Thank you.